

**Remarks:**

The above amendments and these remarks are responsive to the Office action dated April 4, 2007.

Prior to entry of this Amendment, claims 1-15, 18-29, 31, 33, 34, 37-39, 41, 42, 44-46, 48, 49 and 51 were pending in the application. Claims 33, 34, 37-39, 41, 42, 44-46, 49 and 51 have been allowed. Claims 8, 11 and 12 have been indicated allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the subject matter of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1-7, 9, 10, 13-15, 18-29, 31, 46 and 48 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), based variously on Marz et al. (US 6,633,306), Harada et al. (Pub. No. US 2001/0040542), Nakajima et al. (US 6,229,531), Meada (Pub. No. US 2003/0067457), Aritake et al. (US 6,478,429), Abramson et al. (Pub. No. US 2003/0214695), Loose (Pub. No. US 2004/0227827), Shimada (Pub. No. US 2003/0132901), Alkoush (Pub. No. US 2003/0189568), Russ et al. (US 7,071,629), Tamura (US 4,458,264), Irwin (US 5,784,038), Kobayashi (Pub. No. US 2002/0001066), Gettemy (Pub. No. 2003/0156100), Heie (US 6,900,798), and/or Henderson (US 5,398,082). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections, note that several of the cited references have effective dates subsequent to applicants' invention, and therefore expressly reserve the right to assert that one or more of the above references are not prior art during future prosecution of this or another application.

Nevertheless, in the interest of furthering prosecution of the present application on the merits, applicants have amended claims 8 and 11 to place such claims in

Page 10 - AMENDMENT  
Serial No. 10/700,800  
HP Docket No. 10015635-4  
KH Docket No. HPCC 328A

independent form. Claims 2, 4-6, 8, 10, 13-15, 18, 19 and 21 have been amended to depend from claim 8 (indicated allowable in its present independent form). Claims 12 and 20 have been amended to depend from claim 12 (indicated allowable in its present independent form). Claims 1, 9, 22-29, 31, 46 and 48 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 2-8, 10-15, 18-21, 33, 34, 37-39, 41, 42, 44-45, 49 and 51 thus remain pending in the application. In view of the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter, applicants understand that all remaining claims are in allowable form.

Applicants note that the Examiner paraphrased the claimed invention as part of the stated reasons for allowance. Applicants agree with the Examiner's conclusions regarding the patentability of the allowed claims, without necessarily agreeing with or acquiescing to the Examiner's reasoning. In particular, applicants believe that the application is allowable because the prior art fails to teach or suggest the invention as claimed, independent of how the invention is paraphrased.

Applicants believe that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the

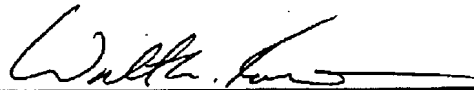
Page 11 - AMENDMENT  
Serial No. 10/700,800  
HP Docket No. 10015635-4  
KH Docket No. HPCC 328A

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Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

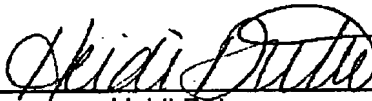
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**CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION**

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to Examiner Vincent E. Kovalick, Group Art Unit 2629, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, at facsimile number (571) 273-8300 on July 5, 2007.



Heidi Dutro

Page 12 -

AMENDMENT  
Serial No. 10/700,800  
HP Docket No. 10015635-4  
KH Docket No. HPCC 328A